

Marlene Herman
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REVVED FOR SUCCESS

Adversity, commitment, determination, perseverance and tenacity are synonymous with Marlene Herman. Ms. Herman spent 25 years in manufacturing, but she couldn't seem to move far enough up the ladder even with long hours, hard work and many accomplishments.

So, in 1994 Marlene, in conjunction with a partner, decided to purchase an AAMCO Transmissions franchise that was struggling as a result of misconduct by the prior owner. The new owners faced several obstacles, including customers who returned due to the poor workmanship under prior management, disgruntled employees given the change in ownership, and newly implemented policies and procedures. Compounding the problem even further was the inability to obtain bank financing of any kind because Marlene had never owned a business.

Problems continued and in 1998, the business lost its lease and was forced to move. This is where the need for capital became critical. "I'm not sure we would be in business today if it were not for the assistance provided the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)" said Ms. Herman. "The SBA's Cleveland office explained in detail what was expected to obtain financing under the 504 loan program". With the assistance of a Bank One loan and the SBA 504 loan debenture in partnership with Growth Capital Corporation, a SBA 504 Certified Development Company, the business received funding to allow it to purchase the building within 30 days of applying.

Marlene also attributes her success to her dedicated partner, many business associates, friends and colleagues who lend advice and/or suggestions when necessary.

Marlene's AAMCO Transmission business at 14138 Lorain Avenue, Cleveland OH, is considered the "brain surgeon" in the business since transmissions are built completely in-house. Providing a quality repair and a National warranty are what place her company's services a notch above the rest. Most business comes from referrals. The business has local fleet accounts and was awarded a contract with the City of Cleveland. In September of 2002 the company expanded and purchased a second location in Cleveland Heights. The business has gone from 2 full-time employees to 9 full-time employees.

Besides being able to compete and compete well in a nontraditional industry, some of Marlene's accolades include her AAMCO Transmissions' business being the 1st transmission repair shop in the State of Ohio to become AAA Certified by the Automotive Automobile Association (2002), being recipient of the 1st District Police/Community Relations Award (2002) and the recipient of Franchisor's Customer Service Awards yearly since 1994.

Even though Marlene wears many business hats, she still finds time to give back to her community. Her involvement includes being an 8 year member and past Director of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO), Cleveland Chapter, a Hard Hatted Women & Career Day Speaker, Advisory Board Member with Cuyahoga Community College, Parma, 2nd term Board of Trustees Vice-President of Kamm's Corners Development Corp., as well as serving in several capacities with the Council of Smaller Enterprises (COSE).